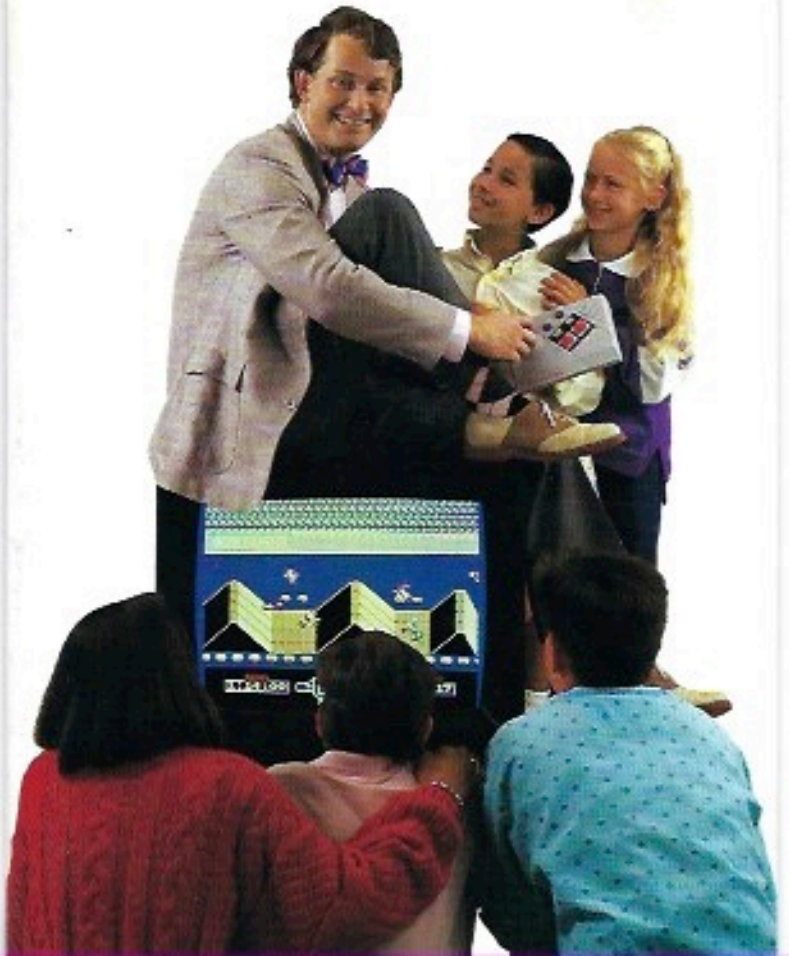
THE FACTS ON HOME VIDEO GAMES...

From the man who plays games for a living.



THE FACTS ON HOME VIDEO GAMES... FROM THE MAN WHO PLAYS GAMES FOR A LIVING

The kids are all talking about it...the excitement of video games. And for families all around the world, home video game systems are becoming an integral component of quality home entertainment. I share that enthusiasm, because my job as product analysis manager at Nintendo of America Inc. (a fancy title for official game tester), has allowed me to play more video games than even the most avid young video game enthusiast.

Here are my tips for selecting a home video game system — tips culled from experience talking face to face with players of all ages about their video game preferences. The tips are also drawn from observing some of our nation's best game players, as well as from insights drawn from playing the games myself. We at Nintendo® have tried to put the essence of my experiences in this brochure to save you the time of having to learn all about video games on your own; but, chances are, once you've finished reading, you'll want to go out and play some games yourself. And why not, you too can be a video game expert!

Howard W. Phillips III

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Look for a system with a broad range of games available. Most video game cartridges (software) can be played on only one video game system (hardware), so it's important to choose a unit for which there is a broad range of software available, from sports games, to educational programs, to action games, to arcade hits, to role-playing adventures. This variety will help make the system more interesting and fun for all family members. Some game systems even feature programmable games which provide players with the opportunity to create their own game challenges.

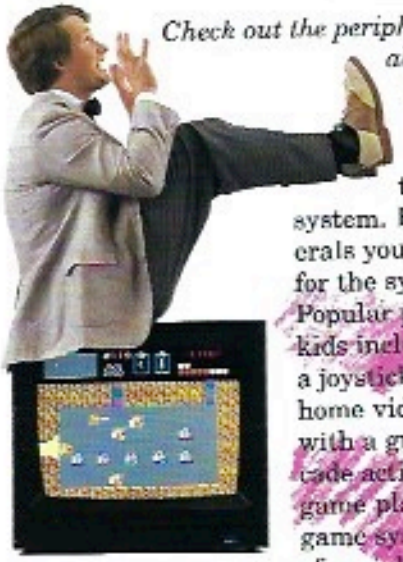
Be sure the system manufacturer stands behind the quality of the software manufactured for that system. Years ago, when video games were first introduced, there were very few controls on the quality and play value of software. These days, companies such as Nintendo exert strict controls over the quality of games developed for their game systems. Be sure to ask about warranties and guarantees before purchasing a system. Look for identification that the manufacturer has reviewed and approved the software. The games are, perhaps, the most important part of the system, so don't skimp on quality here.

O TIPS ON SHOPPING FOR A HOME V

Look for systems that play the top arcade hits. Arcade hit games have already been put to the test by expert video game fans — so you know they're good. Some arcade hits available for the Nintendo home system are Super Mario Bros.®, Rygar[1], Track & Field[2] and Donkey Kong®.

Choose a system that offers top quality graphics. The graphics, special effects and resolution of video games are crucial to the level of challenge and player satisfaction. Today's best video game systems are very sophisticated, but try to see a demo of several games, or look for phrases such as "52-color graphic resolution" on the package to insure that you're buying a system with top-notch graphics.

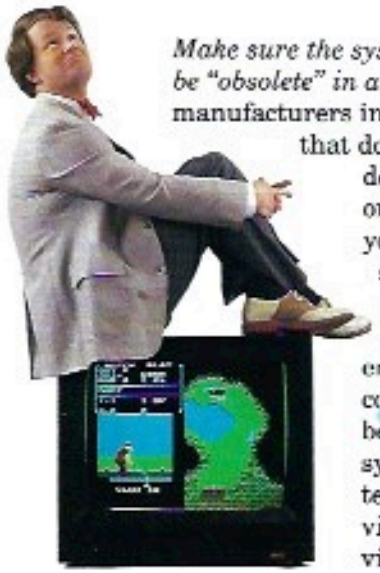
Choose a system that lets you tailor it to your own needs. Different people want different things in a video system and a variety of systems are available. For example, ask if there is a basic model of the system and an assortment of peripherals that can be added one at a time, as your needs and interests change; or is there only the option of purchasing a system that has a lot of "bells and whistles" you may not need. Be sure to investigate limitations and special features of each model. Prices vary but you can expect to spend between $80.00 (for a basic model) and $140.00 (with one or two peripherals) for a good system.



Check out the peripherals that are available for the system. Peripherals are accessories that can help add to the play value of the system. Be sure the peripherals you want are available for the system you choose. Popular peripherals among kids include a light gun and a joystick, both providing home video game players with a greater sense of arcade action and exciting game play. A good video game system offers a variety of peripherals because peripherals can customize a system to your personal desires, or they can expand the system to make it interesting for the whole family. Make sure the system is designed to incorporate new peripherals, as well as those already on the market. Nintendo, for example, has a Family Fun Fitness Mat[3] that is compatible with its system.

IDEO GAME SYSTEM

Make sure the manufacturer stands behind its product. Look for a good warranty, and be sure there is a way for you to get information to questions ranging from technical topics, such as "How do I set up the system?", to play-oriented concerns, such as "How do I advance to the next level of play in a particular game title?" At Nintendo, there is a toll-free number and a fully-staffed consumer service department to answer questions from owners of its highly popular Nintendo Entertainment System® (NES).



Make sure the system you choose won't be "obsolete" in a year or two. Some manufacturers introduce new models that don't play the games developed for their original system. Ask your retailer about scheduled releases of new games and peripherals to help ensure you've picked a company that stands behind its original system and is committed to the long-term viability of the home video game business.

Find out if the game system is expandable. Expandable systems allow for additional computer memory or new peripherals to be added as video game technology develops. For example, Japan's version of the Nintendo Entertainment System®, known as the Famicom, features a floppy disk drive to run games and a keyboard that teaches basic programming. There is also a disk-driven, facsimile transmitter for the Famicom. It will enable users to be part of a large home information network — without ever having to leave the house. Expandability is the hallmark of today's generation of video game systems.

Finally, here's the most important tip: go with the system the players are talking about. Players know which systems are the most fun, so it makes sense to pick the one that is very popular. Many electronic games have lots of "sex-appeal" in a TV commercial, but very few offer the kind of consistently challenging game play that can keep the entire family stimulated and entertained for hours. There is a term for this in the toy industry — it's called depth of game play. No one can tell you more about depth of game play than the players who use a toy or game for hours on end. They're really the experts. If you're still unsure, try some of the games yourself. Chances are you'll agree with the avid players!

THEN...AND NOW

Despite the fact that the early video games were fascinating to the American public, compared with today's sophisticated systems the games were:

- limited in graphics and depth of play;
- played at their best only in arcades;
- restricted to few colors; and
- constrained by poor audio qualities with a limited variety of sound effects.

Today's video games incorporate a whole new generation of technology and offer:

- extremely challenging action thanks to compact, powerful computer chips;
- three-dimensional screen images;
- 52 colors resulting in excellent definition;
- lush audio characteristics complete with complicated musical scores and realistic sound effects;
- exciting peripherals, such as the NES Advantage™, a joystick which offers non-stop playing power and the options of a rapid-fire function and a slow motion control;
- programmable games which allow players to create their own challenges;
- expandability to accommodate future applications; and
- a wide variety of games, suitable for all age levels and interests.

VIDEO VALUE

Surprisingly, video games are not just for fun! Over the years they have been used as a powerful teaching tool. Today's games, because of their interactive nature, are considered valuable by researchers, educators, scientists, and psychologists. Research has shown that interactive video games can provide therapeutic physical and mental benefits for the chronically ill, the handicapped and the elderly. Playing video games can increase learning retention and comprehension for youngsters and adults alike. Consider these facts:

Therapeutic Value...

- "The games demand that you remain alert, keep track of the rules and develop a degree of hand-eye coordination." — Dr. William Lynch, Veteran's Administration Center in Palo Alto, California, on retraining stroke and brain-trauma victims.
- "Interactive video games effect significant improvements in self-esteem among residents of long-term care facilities." — Clemson University study.

Psychological Value...

- "Since children can successfully compete with adults by the age of 8 to 10, it (playing video games) may give them a sense of mastery and help with self-esteem." — John Munder Rose, a Manhattan clinical psychologist.
- Families with video game systems communicate and enjoy each other in a new style. — *Personal Computers and the Family.*
- "Computers increase self-satisfaction through their interactive nature." — Psychologist Neil Frude, University of Wales.

Educational Value...

- "Video games facilitate the cognitive learning process by enhancing parallel processing, real time perception, hand-to-eye coordination, and inductive reasoning skills." — Patricia Marks Greenfield, U.C.L.A. researcher and author of *Mind and Media.*
- "Playing video games can give children a good start in computer education." — TOKYO INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING.

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Video games today are a source of entertainment for both adults and children. The interactive nature of the games makes them challenging to all age groups. Like board games or other more traditional forms of recreation, they offer players the opportunity to reach for a goal. However, in seeking that goal, players derive an enhanced sense of enjoyment from the depth of game play, two and three-dimensional graphics, realistic audio effects, automatic score-keeping, the allure of chance and the excitement of fast-paced action.

The new generation of video games are a departure from the original games in part because of their expandability. Built around sophisticated computer chips, video games in years to come will offer families a number of other activities. There will be peripherals designed for each member of the family: young girls, fathers, young boys, grandmothers, mothers ... fun for everyone. The Family Fun Fitness Mat[3], which offers families computerized aerobic exercise, is a perfect example.

Even preschoolers can benefit from video games. Many parents find that playing video games with young children — say 4 - 7 year olds — encourages parent-child bonding and allows the child to begin developing certain skills and aptitudes at an earlier age than otherwise might be the case. For example, some parents have reported that playing tennis on a video game has increased their child's understanding of the subtleties of actual tennis, thereby improving their sports skills.

Whether it's facing the challenge of the video game version of tennis, or coaching a younger player to travel through the 32 levels of a game such as Super Mario Bros®, home video game systems give families the chance to have fun together.

So, the next time you see your child playing a video game, why not join in and see what all the excitement is about!

For further information about video games, the following books and papers are recommended:

- *Mind and Media, the Effects of Television, Video Games and Computers*, by Patricia Marks Greenfield, Harvard University Press
- *Personal Computers and the Family*, by Edna Mitchell, Haworth Press

- *Teaching Television: How to Use TV to Your Child's Advantage*, by D.G. Singer, J.L. Singer & D.M. Zuckerman, Dial Press
- *"Video Games and Human Development, A Research Agenda for the '80's,"* Harvard Graduate School of Education, May 1983.

For questions about the Nintendo Entertainment System®, please call 800/422-2602 or inside Washington State (206) 882-2040 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (PST), Monday through Friday.

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[1] The following is a registered trademark of Tecmo, Inc: Rygar™
[2] The following is a registered trademark of Konami Inc: Track & Field™
[3] The following is a registered trademark of Bandai America Inc: Family Fun Fitness™
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